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SUBJECT: (U) AMBASSADOR AND POLISH PRIME MINISTER DISCUSS IRAQ

Classified By: CDA Frank C. Urbancic for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary and Introduction: The Ambassador met with Polish PM Leszek Miller on November 10, 2003 at Bayan Palace, prior to the Prime Minister's scheduled visit to Iraq. Discussion centered on coalition efforts in Iraq, including Ambassador Jones's new responsibilities in Baghdad. The PM expressed Poland's continued interest in reconstruction efforts in Iraq, but urged the USG to speed up the transition of authority to the Iraqi people. Also present at the meeting were Dr. Boguslaw Zaleski, Deputy Minister of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Polish Ambassador to Kuwait, Wojciech Bozek. End Summary and Introduction.

¶2. (C) The Ambassador began the meeting by offering the PM his condolences upon the death of a Polish coalition member in Iraq. He stressed that although the coalition was taking casualties in Iraq, the situation on the ground was different from the impression one might get from the international media. The Ambassador described his new role in Iraq as a reflection of the fact that the effort in Iraq was entering a new phase. He said that while the overall goal would be for the CPA to work itself out of a job, his role would be to try and increase the responsiveness and transparency of the CPA by providing outreach to the IGC and the Iraqi people. The Ambassador noted that Poland, as a country with a wealth of experience in transitioning from an authoritarian government with a command economy to a free-market democracy, could have much to contribute in Iraq.

¶3. (C) PM Miller thanked the Ambassador for his comments, and agreed that Poland would have much to offer in Iraq. He said Poland would always share its knowledge where helpful.

¶4. (C) Miller, who had met with Kuwaiti PM Shaykh Sabah and Speaker of the National Assembly, Jassem Al-Khorafi earlier in the day, said the Kuwaitis had asked him to share with the USG their concern about the situation in Iraq. Miller said the Kuwaitis had said they believe &more political instruments are needed⁸ in Iraq, and that the establishment of a constitution and holding of elections, along with the transfer of authority to an Iraqi governing body, should be key goals of the CPA. He said PM Sabah and Speaker Khorafi had both expressed concern that political elements begin to replace the largely military effort in Iraq. Miller noted that this was logical, but difficult to do in practice.

¶5. (C) Miller said Polish troops &should be there until the Iraqis take responsibility,⁸ but admitted that not having any timeline for this was a cause for concern, as maintaining a military presence in Iraq came at considerable financial cost to Poland. The Coalition should do everything possible to speed up the process in Iraq, he said, offering Poland's support and expertise in the endeavor. The PM explained that more than 40,000 Polish workers had worked in Iraq in the 1960's, 70's and 80's building the country's infrastructure, and Polish companies with prior experience in Iraq were waiting for the opportunity to be involved in reconstruction efforts. Miller said that Poles were beginning to ask what they are getting in return for having supported the US politically and militarily. &American business will always have a presence (in Iraq),⁸ Miller said, &but so far for us it has not been fruitful.⁸

¶6. (C) Looking at the region from a broader perspective, Miller said Poland harbors ambitions of becoming more involved in the Middle East and Asia, as what will happen here will have &enormous consequences for the world.⁸ Miller said Poland's cooperation with the US was its pleasure, adding that the US could count on Poland to meet its commitments.

¶7. (C) Deputy Foreign Minister Zaleski said he had traveled the region extensively, and the message leaders here passed to him is that they want more &internationalization.⁸ Specific to Iraq, he said they had suggested the establishment of a policy board to make policy and reconstruction decisions. Zaleski noted that the CPA's Council for International Coordination was headed by a Pole, Ambassador Marek Belka, and expressed his optimism that the Ambassador would work with Belka in his new capacity in Iraq. As for Polish economic involvement in reconstruction, he reiterated that Polish companies were still waiting for their

turn. &If only US companies are involved in reconstruction,⁸ he said, &no one will believe this was done for the Iraqi people.⁸

18. (C) On Polish expertise in rebuilding and transforming the economy, Zaleski said Poland had made many mistakes, but at least it had an idea of where it was going. He argued that the situation in Iraq was much different, and the problems were compounded by sectarianism and a lack of consensus about what path to take. Zaleski warned that the establishment of a federation in Iraq would be destabilizing, and urged the adoption of a constitution similar to Lebanon's as a possible option.

19. (C) The PM ended the meeting by wishing the Ambassador success, noting that the road ahead would be foggy and full of surprises. He offered Poland's support wherever helpful and necessary. The Ambassador thanked the PM, and explained that while we would rely on our allies to tell us when they think we are making mistakes, we would most certainly, in the words of Lincoln, not be able to &please all of the people all of the time.⁸

10. (C) Ambassador Jones did not have a chance to clear this cable before departing for temporary duty in Baghdad.

11. (U) Baghdad minimize considered.

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